

politics unique in its tone and compelling in its vision. You can be sure that this was only the start, and that the people will regain their rightful role in this democracy in the days and years to come.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE PROGRESS FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHANDLER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am a new Member of Congress and proud to be part of an institution that has been the cradle of democracy, and very proud to be part of this new class of Republicans and Democrats that came here in the year 2007.

Mr. Speaker, in Vermont, and I think across America, average citizens were somewhat bewildered when they looked at what was happening in Washington. When they saw us go from a record surplus to a record deficit, the only conclusion they could come to was we had lost our way.

When they saw that the drug companies prevailed in actually getting legislation that prohibited price negotiation to get the best price for taxpayers and seniors, they thought America had lost its way.

When they saw that over the course of 9 years, Congress had allowed itself nine pay increases totaling \$31,000, but the minimum wage worker was stuck at \$5.15 an hour, they thought America had lost its way.

When they saw that when major legislation was brought before this body and the vote was extended for 3 or 4 hours in order to arm-twist, persuade people to change their votes, they thought Congress had lost its way.

I believe what this election was about across America was people in Vermont and people in districts from Vermont to California saying that they wanted Congress to start solving problems. What this 100 hours was about was making a down payment to America, where we are trying to give confidence to Americans that this Congress can do the work that needs to be done to improve the lives of average, everyday people. The strength of our democracy has always depended on a strong middle-class and opportunities for people at the low income level who want to climb the ladder of opportunity.

What we have done in this first 100 hours, frankly, working together with

many on the other side of the aisle, is establish that we actually can govern and we can pass legislation that will be meaningful. We have rejected politics as being about finding wedge issues that will divide us so that we can focus on economic issues that can unite us. And this is a beginning, it is not an end.

These first 100 hours, in my view, have been remarkable. We have changed the way Congress does business by enacting ethics reforms; no meals, no free trips, no free travel, and we did this with the support of 68 Republicans.

To return to fiscal responsibility, we adopted pay-as-you-go budgeting. That is going to impose itself on Republicans and Democrats, whether proposing spending increases for programs you favor or tax cuts you might want to advocate for. We did this with the support of 48 Republicans.

To help working families who have really been squeezed as our economy starts widening between those who have and everyone else, we passed cuts in student loan interest rates that will save the average student about \$4,400 over the life of the loan, and we did that with the support of 124 Republicans.

We passed, of course, the first minimum wage increase in 10 years, and that is going to help America's lowest paid workers, and we did that with all the Democrats and the support of 82 Republicans.

And on and on; on stem cell research, on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, and the commonsense step of ending tax breaks for Big Oil that costs taxpayers \$14 billion, while it increased our dependence on foreign oil and put off the day when we embraced the challenge and obligation all of us know we have, to move towards alternative energy.

What we know is this: America has very severe challenges: Health care, 47 million Americans without it; health care for the Americans that do have it, that they are increasingly finding they can't afford; bringing our troops home from Iraq; restoring our budget to balance; moving in a new direction on energy.

What we know is true is that the only way we are going to solve those problems is if we work together. We are in it together, and it is by working together, as we have in these past 100 hours, that we can make progress for America.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BAIRD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE REST OF THE STORY WITH REGARD TO THE DEMOCRATS' 100 HOURS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for half the time remaining before 2 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as always, I am profoundly pleased and honored to have the privilege to address you on the floor of the House of Representatives here in the United States Congress.

I have had the interesting observation here as I listened to the speakers that come from the other side of the aisle that there is another story, the rest of the story is out there, and a number of things need to be discussed, and one of them is what did we actually do here in the first 100 hours, as was referenced by at least three of the speakers.

In the first 100 hours, the point was made that they kept all of their promises that they would keep within the first 100 hours. We are going to disagree as to how we define that and what the results of it were, and I think it is appropriate in this democratic process that we have that is framed under this constitutional republic that we are, that we talk about and have open dialogue and debate. And that was one of the casualties, I would point out, Mr. Speaker, to this accelerated 100-hour process.

The 100-hour promise was something that sounded good politically. It had a nice ring to it. The bell tolled 100 hours, so therefore the image of accomplishing these things for America was going to get done in 100 hours.

Well, 100 hours can be counted a lot of different ways, and some people would have thought that at midnight, December 31, when you heard the band strike up Auld Lang Syne, then the 100 hours would begin and this harder working than ever Congress and more ethical than ever Congress and more open and more democratic than ever Congress was going to go to work, and in the first 4 days and 4 hours would accomplish these things.

No, I did not actually make that point either, Mr. Speaker. I think it is appropriate for us to have a real legitimate method of keeping track of the 100 hours. If that is going to be the one